

to establish an integrated telecommunications system at affordable costs to the education sector.

The EDSAT bill will authorize the Secretary of Education to provide a \$35 million loan guarantee for the purpose of acquiring an education satellite. This is significantly less than the \$270 million guarantee requested last session of Congress. The purchase of this satellite will allow education programming, now scattered across numerous satellites, to be collocated, or put in one place in the sky. This will allow schools to receive far more educational programming—without constantly reorienting their satellite dishes. Collocation will also enhance the marketing of programming, reduce technical problems, and stabilize the pricing of satellite time.

Federal backing of such a system will not only heighten the educational opportunities for our children, but it will also benefit State and local educational agencies by ultimately reducing their expenses for satellite services and equipment. Further, while distance learning can never replace classroom teachers, it does provide educators with an additional tool with which to teach.

This is just the first step and certainly not the only answer to solving the problems that schools face in using satellites. However, I believe that it is an important step for the Federal Government to take to help encourage the use of technology in the education sector. Improving the accessibility and quality of education will help our children and our national economy as a whole to become stronger and more competitive in the global marketplace.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND THE AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE SKEEN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 25, 1993

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts made by Mr. ROBERTS, the ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture, in securing this time to address the effects of the Budget Reconciliation Act on this country's most endangered species: The American farmer. Some have made the argument that the President doesn't need to worry about agriculture because agriculture makes up only 2 percent of the population. However, this small percentage of the population brings a positive balance to our trade deficit, out produces any other nation, and provides the American public with a bountiful supply of food at low prices.

Agriculture needs more champions, like Kika DE LA GARZA and PAT ROBERTS, the chairman and ranking member of the Agriculture Committee. As members of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, our responsibility is to work toward directing the spending for some of this country's vital programs dealing with agriculture, rural development, and nutrition programs. However, we have jurisdiction only for discretionary spending which comprises no more than 30 percent of the bill. Over 70 percent of the bill is made up of mandatory programs, such as food stamps, the School Lunch Program, and the Commodity Credit Corporation which are off limits.

If we are ever going to get a hold of this budget deficit crisis, we must be willing to grapple with the fact that these mandatory spending programs are inflating out of control. And it is going to take leadership from the President to urge Congress and the authorizing committees to break this gridlock by controlling mandatory programs. Otherwise Congress will continue to increase these programs in an irresponsible manner, as we are witnessing in the agriculture section of the budget reconciliation bill.

Let us remember agriculture ended up over \$57 billion in cuts in the 1990 farm bill and now is being asked to sustain cuts of \$2.95 billion from the USDA budget, further jeopardizing farm income. These are the same farmers who are already suffering from weak grain and commodity prices. At the same time, this plan would increase spending on food stamps by \$7.3 billion over the same 5-year period.

I do not have anything against increasing the level of spending for food stamps, but it should not be done at the expense of the farmer. In fact, the Food Stamp Program has many inherent problems associated with fraud and abuse. When the Inspector General testified at a hearing earlier this year, he mentioned that the Food Stamp Program is a very high-risk program which is costing this Nation millions of dollars due to fraud and abuse. Our committee is committed to working with USDA to remedy these abuses, but we need some more time.

We are exploring some very creative solutions, and given enough time to fully implement them nationwide, we can save millions of dollars. For instance, one of the most promising pilot programs is the Electronic Benefits Transfer Program being tested in the State of Maryland. A complete and thorough evaluation will be conducted, and if warranted, I suggest that this program be extended to other States with large occurrences of fraud and abuse. To throw another \$7.3 billion at this program before we address these problems of abuse is an abuse in and of itself.

I'm further disturbed with the Btu tax proposal which singles out the farmer whose energy consumption is the basis of all production. It has been estimated that the farmer can be expected to pay from \$1,000 to \$4,000 each year in additional taxes attributable to the Btu tax. The make matters worse almost \$40 billion in new spending for food stamps, the earned income tax credit, and low income energy assistance is needed to offset the harm done by this new tax. The farmer pays a disproportionate amount of the Btu tax, and then is also asked to bear the consequences of increased spending for the Food Stamps Program.

Farmers have paid more than their share toward reducing the debt over the last decade. It is unfair to ask them now to make another major sacrifice for a plan which makes very little progress on the deficit. Raising \$3.23 in taxes for every \$1 in spending cuts over 5 years is not going to address our huge deficit problems. We can do better.

Again, I commend Mr. ROBERTS for giving this issue the heightened awareness that it deserves. I look forward to working with him and the chairman of the agriculture committee to protect the most endangered species of all: The American farmer.

FACTORY TRAWLER EQUITABLE TAX ACT INTRODUCED

HON. MICHAEL J. KOPETSKI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1993

Mr. KOPETSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, the Factory Trawler Equitable Tax Act, to impose an excise tax on the offshore processing of fish, specifically Pacific whiting.

This legislation is straightforward. The amount of the tax per metric ton shall be 10 percent of the ex-vessel value, approximately \$7.70 to \$8.80 per metric ton in today's market. Importantly, the bill directs that revenues collected from the tax be dedicated to Pacific whiting habitat restoration and rebuilding of fisheries and fishing stock, and by-catch gear selectivity and reduction research in Oregon, Washington and California.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this spring, the Secretary of Commerce overrode the recommendation of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council and Commerce's own previously published proposed rule relating to an allocation of Pacific whiting. This action established what is generally known as an "olympic fishery" that strongly favored the large factory trawlers that process Pacific whiting off-shore and a small reserve for the vessels that fish for the on-shore processors. Commerce defended its action by stating that the final rule was fair and equitable to all parties fishing for Pacific whiting.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, the on-shore fishermen never had a chance under this plan. After only 1 week, of the 112,000 tons of Pacific whiting allocated to the olympic fishery, the factory trawlers had harvested nearly 25,000 tons while the on-shore fishermen had harvested only 214 tons. Commerce's ill-founded assumption that the on-shore sector would harvest 12,000 tons in the initial fishery began to look ridiculous. When it became painfully obvious that the factory trawlers were going to suck up the entire initial allocation, Commerce was forced to issue an emergency rule, stopping the olympic fishery earlier than expected in order to save some of the fish for the on-shore vessels.

Initial reports also indicate that the Pacific whiting caught by the off-shore sector was of inferior quality because the fish had just completed spawning and were depleted. Some processors estimate that recovery of product from whole fish is 6 to 10 percent below normal. Other indicators, such as the production of fish oil, also confirm the poor quality of the Pacific whiting caught by the off-shore sector this year.

Mr. Speaker, the factory trawlers and motherhips that fish and process Pacific whiting are set up to handle only whiting. Additionally, they only handle whiting of a certain size. Whiting too small or too large, as well as the incidental take of all other groundfish and other fish species, are discarded. In 1992 the entire catch and discard by the factory trawlers, other than whiting, was 7 percent of all quota managed species by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Because the factory fleet does not utilize this by-catch, this 7 percent equals 10,502,633 pounds of non-utilized and wasted resource by the factory trawl-